

## Jelebu Customary Songs and Sayings.

COLLECTED BY A. CALDECOTT,

WITH PREFACE AND NOTES BY R. O. WINSTEDT.

These *těromba* 'Songs of Origin,' and these 'Customary Sayings' *pěbilangan adat*, as they are called in Negri Sembilan or *pěpatah* to use their Minangkabau name, were collected by Mr. Caldecott in Jelebu, of which State he has written an adequate history (Papers on Malay Subjects; second series, No. 1: F. M. S. Govt. Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1912).

A great deal of material has been printed on the Minangkabau Malays of Negri Sembilan—Martin Lister's careful articles, Mr. Humphreys' Naning Proverbs and excellent Wedding Speech from Naning, papers by O'Brien and Hervey and Bland, and Messrs. Parr and Mackray's exhaustive "Rembau" have all been published in past Journals. Mr. Wilkinson, who had then never lived in Negri Sembilan, wrote an extraordinarily illuminating introduction to the *adat pěrpatěh* in "Law II" in "Papers on Malay Subjects." Many of the articles that have appeared overlap, and the present collection is no exception. But all is grist to the mill of comparative method. "Knowledge is knowledge of relations,"—especially in the Minangkabau world!—and this paper has profited by comparison with those earlier articles; as well as with the *adat* of Minangkabau and its Sumatran colonies as delineated in Willinck's "Het Rechtsleven bij de Minangkabausehe Maleiers" (Leiden, 1909) and in the series of volumes on Malayan custom published by "Het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indiě" ('s-Gravenhage) and entitled "Adat-rechtbundel."

The comparative method has helped, for example, to explain the line *yang běrsěsap, yang běrjěrami* which puzzled the authors of "Rembau;" it has proved that for their impossible *běrsa-orangan* the Minangkabau word *pěrsuarangan* (common enough in Negri Sembilan) should be restored; it has shown us that for *gěmok běr-pupok* on p. 39 of Mr. Caldecott's "Jelebu" should be read *gěmok di-pěrgěpokkan*.

It may be said that textual points are of dilettante interest. Well, the comparative method helps also to reveal how funda-







came the slave of his creditor: he paid his debts in his body. The settlement of his debts alone preserved his free life and hence became a duty of his mother's family. The obligation of payment extended not only to the *private debts* of the bachelor, his unpaid bills, his less happy speculations and his losses at the gaming table—but also to the *utang adat* (and *utang pēsaka*.)” Now this is true still so far as *utang adat* and *utang pēsaka* are involved. Is it true to-day of a bachelor's irresponsible debts? Certainly the *adat tanggong-mēnanggong* is not so construed in Johol or in Jelevu or in Minangkabau itself. Yet judgment was once given on appeal against a Rembau's man's unfortunate female relation, the judge being loathe to reject evidence collected by the “intelligent enquiry of the local magistrate:” though in a later case of the same kind, another judge derided such an interpretation as ludicrous and opposed to principles of equity, adding caustic comments on the *adat* in general.

The Court, unlike the authors of “Rembau,” did not recognize that honest involency does not now entail imprisonment or affect the liberty of the debtor, so that the axiom *nyawa darah pulang ka-waris* no longer applies. Apart from that, where land speculations have undone a man, one might contend that rules framed by a frugal pastoral people did not contemplate comparatively large speculations in rubber or tin. And again private individualistic dealings in land would have been quite impossible in a strictly communal society. And the *adat* is not an inelastic code of law but bows to altered conditions.\* In any case, so far from conserving the *adat* whole, our criminal courts daily give judgments anathema to its principles. But is any of this special pleading necessary? Let us hear, what Willinck writes about the *adat tanggong-mēnanggong* as interpreted in Minangkabau itself:—

“A Minangkabau Malay at all times can bind himself validly *ex contractu* only so far as his *harta pēncharian* go: *ex delicto* not only he but his whole family were bound in *adat* times—his family only if he himself could not pay for his misdeed or crime, in which case his family became liable for the smart-money according to the *adat tanggong-mēnanggong*. So a whole tribe or *nēgēri* could become liable for smart-money, when one of its people had committed a crime, and the criminal's relatives even might become debt-slaves of the avenger. . . . . A Minangkabau Malay can never validly of his own self conclude bargains *ex contractu*, which affect *harta pēsaka*: if he contracts a bargain, no action thereon can be taken by the creditor against the man's family, but always only against the debtor and even then only against his *harta pēncharian*. . . . . The principle difference the *adat* makes between debts *ex contractu* and debts *ex delicto* is this: a man's family is liable for the former only if they are incurred properly, that is, contracted by the head

\* *Vide* “Rembau,” p. 69, 70; and with the growth of population in the tribes (*suku*), tribal exogamy is no longer observed everywhere.

of the family after agreement (*sa-kata*) of its members; debts *ex delicto* were claimed *ipso jure* from the whole family, if the guilty member were unable or unwilling to pay."

Now that passage is perfectly clear, even though its application of terms of Roman law to the humble customs of Sumatran villagers must strike a note jarring to any ear sensitive to style and atmosphere. And Willinck's account holds good of Jelebu and of Johol. *Pusing anak Rĕmbau!* Did they circumvent that local magistrate? Anyhow, there is plenty of evidence to support rejection in practice of an interpretation absurd and opposed to equity.

As I said above, a great deal has been written on the customs of Negri Sembilan and a great mystery made of them. But we still lack the evidence of the people themselves, their customary sayings and maxims, their speeches on occasions of ceremony. Students generally have recorded only *disjecta membra* of the *adat*. Mr. Humphreys was the first to give us scholarly versions of long speeches. Now Mr. Caldecott gives us these *tĕromba* or 'songs of origin' and a coherent set of sayings. For a later Journal I am preparing a collection of speeches from the district of Kuala Pilah; and I hope also to print one of the several versions I have obtained locally of *Undang-Undang Minangkabau*. Only when sufficient Malay material has been recorded, can we expect to get a readable definitive and comparative account of Minangkabau custom in the Negri Sembilan.

We are indebted to Mr. J. E. Nathan for the explanation of several abstruse passages.



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Songs of Origin  
and  
Customary Sayings

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6

TĒROMBA.

I.

Allah bĕlum bĕrnama Allah,  
 Muhamad bĕlum bĕrnama Nabi;  
 Bumi bĕlum bĕrnama bumi,  
 Bumi bĕrnama pusat nĕgĕri;  
 Langit bĕlum bĕrnama langit,  
 Langit bĕrnama payong nĕgĕri;  
 Bumi itu sa-gĕdang talam,  
 Langit itu sa-gĕdang payong;  
 Gagak puteh, bangau hitam,  
 Dato' bujang, nenek gadis;  
 Sa-jaman raja jatoh tĕdiri  
 Sa-jaman pĕnghulu jatoh tĕrpĕkur,  
 Sa-jaman lĕmbaga jatoh tĕrsila,  
 Tĕrbit adat dua tĕripar,  
 Ka-laut Tĕnggong<sup>1</sup>, ka-darat Pĕrpateh,  
 Adat bĕrtĕntu, bilang bĕratur;  
 Bĕruntok bĕrharta masing-masing.  
 Buloh bilah, tanah di-tanam,  
 Bĕsi bĕrdĕnting, puntong bĕrasap,  
 Sa-bingkah tanah di-tanam,  
 Tumbuh aur nan bĕrjijir.  
 To' Kali Padang Gĕnting,  
 To' Sĕnama<sup>2</sup> di-Suasa,  
 To' Kalifah di-nĕgĕri Tambang,  
 To' Mĕngkudum di-nĕgĕri Sumanik.  
 Di-sambut raja Pagar Ruyong;  
 Lalu ka-Siak, ka-(?) Siam, Jambi;  
 Lalu ka-Rokan. ka-Panalian;  
 Lalu ka-riak yang bĕrdĕrun,<sup>3</sup>  
 Tĕmpat aur yang bĕrsurat,  
 Tĕmpat pisau-pisau<sup>4</sup> hanyut,  
 Tĕmpat sialang bĕrlantak bĕsi<sup>5</sup>;  
 Lalu durian di-takek Raja—

1 = Temenggong. 2 Indĕra Mah; vide note, p 16. It is pronounced in Minangkabau *Indome* 3 *Riak* "ripples" or is it some forgotten place-name?

4. We have followed the editor of the "Undang-Undang of Moco-Moco" in translating *pisau-pisau*: vide Vol. II "Miscellanies" (Bencoolen, 1822), p.5. A similar interpretation is given at Sri Menanti.

5. That paper also explains *Si-pisau-pisau hanyut*, *Sialang bĕrlantak bĕsi* and *Durian di-takek raja* as names of places, the last opposite to *Tanjong si-Malido*. *Sialang bĕrlantak bĕsi* is translated "the honey-comb reached by means of iron pegs driven into the tree." There is no doubt that *sialang*



## SONGS OF ORIGIN.

## I.

Ere God was known to men as Lord  
 Or Muhamad as His Prophet,  
 Ere Earth was given the name of Earth,  
 When Earth was called the country's navel,  
 Ere sky was designated sky  
 When sky was called the world's umbrella:—  
 Earth no bigger than a salver,  
 Sky no larger than a sunshade:—  
 Crows were white and black were egrets;  
 Our first forebears, boy and maiden  
 Knew not yet the bond of wedlock;  
 When to earth a prince fell standing,  
 And the first of chiefs fell pensive,  
 And the first of tribal headmen  
 Fell in attitude of homage:—  
 Then arose two ways of custom,  
 One to seaward, that of Tenggong,  
 Landward one, that of Perpateh,—  
 Custom sure with its set sayings,  
 Giving each his share and portion.  
 Bamboo laths were split for building,  
 Mankind tilled the earth primaeval,  
 Iron clinked and log-ends smouldered,  
 Clods were turned for tilth and planting,  
 Bamboo stems grew up in order.  
 To' Kali ruled in Padang Genting  
 To' Senama in Suasa,  
 To' Kalifah in land of Tambang,  
 In Sumanik To' Mangkudum;  
 The prince of Paggarryong hailed it  
 And the custom went to Siak,  
 Then to Siam and to Jambi  
 To Rokan and to Panalian

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here = "large trees on which bees have built a nest" (and such trees are still *pēsaka* in Negri Sembilan); below, we get *si-balong* as a variant. And it is probable that the iron pegs were driven in as "climbing steps" and not as boundary-marks: though another customary phrase *lantak bértukul* = "the boundary-marks that are hammered in," not "the boundary posts that are beaten," as the authors of "Rembau" (Journal 56, p. 108 XXIII) translate it, if by that rendering they allude, as one would infer, to "beating bounds":—their note on p. 47 is correct.

Bukan raja sa-barang raja,  
 Raja asal, raja usul,  
 Raja mēnitek dari langit,  
 Sama ada dēngan kayu-kayuan,  
 Sama tumbuh dēngan rumput ranting;  
 Keturunan raja bērdarah puteh:  
 Nan tēgak mēngangkat sēmbah,  
 Nan dudok mēnangkat sila;  
 Bēri makan sa-jambar sa-orang;  
 Minum di-tabong bērpalut ēmas,  
 Tidor di-tilam nan bērtēkat.

Di-mana jalan Baginda Giri?

Di-baroh balai panjang.

Mana bēnar adat tērdiri?

Di-Batipuh, Padang Panjang.

Siapa yang chērdek bijaksana?  
 Pērtama To' Pērpateh, kēdua To' Tēnggong,  
 Yang mēngētahui jalan dua tēripar;  
 Nama jalan dua tēripar,  
 Pērtama jalan karna Allah,  
 Kēdua jalan ka-pada dunia.  
 Jalan Allah, pērtama mēnguchap,  
 Kēdua sēmbahyang, kētiga zakat,  
 Kēempat puasa, kēlima naik haji.  
 Jalan ka-dunia itu,  
 Pērtama gong dan chanang,  
 Makan dan minum,  
 Sēmanda-mēnyēmanda.

Kēmēndian maka di-bilang—

Sa-hēlai akar yang putus,  
 Sa-bingkah tanah yang tērbalek,  
 Sa-batang kayu yang rēbah;  
 Sa-batang kayu akan mēlintang,  
 Sa-bingkah tanah akan pērmatang,  
 Sa-hēlai akar akan bērikat.  
 Tanah-nya datar, pērmatang-nya lurus,  
 Orang ramai, padi mēnjadi.

Kēmudian

Raja bēralam, pēnghulu bērluak,  
 Suku bērlingkongan,  
 Ibu-bapa bēranak buah,  
 Anak buah dudok bērsuku-suku.



And to sea-lavèd sounding beaches  
 Where were found the bamboo writings,  
 Roof-tree carved on water drifting,  
 Trees with spikes to climb for honey.  
 Then the Raja marked the fruit trees,  
 He a prince of no mean station,  
 He the first king, king *primaeval*.  
 Dropped he as the rain from heaven,  
 He with forest-trees coeval,  
 Old as grass at the beginning;  
 White the blood that in him flowed:  
 Erect men made him salutation,  
 Sitting yielded him obeisance;  
 Food men brought him, each a platter;  
 Drank he from a bamboo beaker  
 Overlaid with golden plating;  
 Slept on an embroidered mattress.

“Where is the path of the prince of Giri?”

“On the river-side of the long palace.”

“What proof is there of the creation of the custom?”

“It came down to Batipuh in Padang Panjang.”

Who the wise men and the clever?  
 First Perpatch, second Tenggong,  
 Who knew well the kindred custom,  
 First the custom God inspireth,  
 Second that of worldly teaching.  
 The way to God is, first, the *credo*,  
 Second prayer, the third almsgiving,  
 Fasting fourth, and fifth the *haj*:  
 The worldly way is gong and clapper  
 Calling men to food and liquor,  
 To marry and to take in marriage.

After comes the saying.—

A broken root, a clod turned upward,  
 A fallen tree to serve as barrier,  
 The upturned clod to bank the rice-field,  
 The trailing stem to bind together.  
 Flat the plain and straight the bankings,  
 Thick the folk and rich the harvest.

Then the prince was given his kingdom,  
 The chief his shire, the tribe its limits,  
 The village elders their dependants;  
 Men were then by tribes divided,  
 And the tribes were twelve in number.

Běrapa suku-nya? Dua-bělas.  
 Kundur mēnjalar ka-ulu,  
 Labu mēnjalar ka-hilir,  
 Puchok-nya sama di-gěntas  
 Buah-nya sama di-tarek:  
 Dėkat rumah, dėkat kampong,  
 Sa-kampong sa-pěrmmainan,  
 Sa-jamban sa-pěrmmandian.

## II.

Sa-jaman si-gadis si-Mara Chindai,<sup>1</sup>  
 Mėlapus<sup>2</sup> pulau tanah Mėlayu;  
 Běrlayar-lah ia děngan pėrahu-nya,  
 Lalu těrgalang-lah pėrahu-nya:  
 Maka bėrgėlar-lah ia Batin Maha Galang<sup>3</sup>  
 Di-tengok-nya puchok mėranti bėranchaman,  
 Nėgėri pun sapėrti ěmbun.

Mėngatur ia adat di-bukit itu:—

Sa-hėlai akar putus akan pėngikat,  
 Sa-batang kayu rėbah akan bėrlintang,  
 Sa-bingkah tanah tėrbalek akan tanam-tanaman.  
 Maka bėrjumpa ia děngan yang bėrėmpat;  
 Bėrtanya Batin Maha Galang,  
 Mėnjawab Dato' yang bėrėmpat  
 Di-atas bukit si-Untang-Untang Pėnjaringan.<sup>4</sup>  
 "Hėndak mēnchari pamah yang lebar,  
 Hėndak mēnchari sungai yang mėlurut;  
 Mėminum ayer bungkul,  
 Bėralas tidur daun lerek,  
 Bėrbantalkan banir durian."

Bėrkata lagi Dato' pada Batin,  
 "Turuni-lah londaran naga;  
 Nak tahu pulau yang mēnumpu,  
 Tanyakan pada dėnak;  
 Nak tahu padang yang luas,  
 Tanyakan pada bilalang;  
 Nak tahu pulau yang panjang,  
 Tanyakan pada barau-barau."

Putus sa-hėlai akar,  
 Sa-bingkah tanah yang tėrbalek,  
 Sa-batang kayu yang tumbang.  
 (Maka bėrjumpa-lah dato' Batin mėninggalkan adat)

1. Possibly *Mėrah* or *Marah*, an old Sumatran title; but was it confined to males? 2? = *hapus* 3 = *Mėrgalang* 4. Ancient Palembang.



Then the marrow clambered upstream,  
 And the gourd grew trailing downstream,  
 Till their shoots were pruned together,  
 And their fruits together taken.  
 House to house grew near together,  
 Hamlet clustered on to hamlet,  
 For their games men used one common,  
 Used one shelter for their bathing.

## II.

In the time of Mara Chindai  
 Isles Malayan all were flooded.  
 So he took to boat, went sailing,  
 Until lo! his boat was stranded  
 On our shore; and so we named him  
 "Mighty chieftain, from the wreckage."  
 On a hill he took his station,  
 Gazed he round upon the treetops  
 Clustering, crowded; and the country  
 Rolled, a misty sea, below him.  
 There did he ordain the custom:—  
 "A trailing stem shall serve for binding,  
 The fallen tree trunk for a barrier,  
 The clod upturned for tith and planting."  
 Then the Batin Maha Galang  
 Met the Four, and asked them questions;—  
 On Palembang hills they answered.  
 "I would seek a spacious valley,  
 I would look for water courses,  
 Tho' I tap the palm for water,  
 Sleep with rustling leaves beneath me,  
 A tree buttress for my pillow."  
 Then the chiefs to him made answer,  
 "Follow down the dragon's traces,  
 And if thou would'st find the hillocks,  
 Islets footed in the marshland,  
 Jungle fowl shall be thy leaders:  
 Seekest thou the spreading meadow,  
 By the grasshopper be guided:  
 The spit of hills between the valleys  
 By the bulbul shall be shown thee."

So the trailing stems were severed,  
 So the clod of earth turned upward,  
 And the trees fell to the woodmen.  
 (Then they met the Batin chieftain  
 And forsook the older custom:)

Takek kayu Batin Jenang;  
 Hela tali pada Waris;  
 Putus tibus pada Undang;  
 Lantak bertukul pada Lembaga,

Maka di-tengok

Adat kampong yang bersudut,  
 Sawah yang berlopak,  
 Rumah yang berkatak<sup>1</sup> tangga,  
 Bilek yang berbunyi

Maka ada-lah adat

Tëtékala nögëri sudah lebar,  
 Orang pun sudah ramai,  
 Adat bertentu, bilang beratur;  
 Bëroleh këchil pada yang gëdang,  
 Bëroleh yang gëdang pada yang tua.

Apa-lah kata orang tua?

“ Dalam alam raja-nya,  
 Dalam luak pënghulu-nya,  
 Dalam suku lembaga-nya,  
 Bërupok masing-masing,  
 Bërharta masing-masing.  
 Harta orang jangan di-tarek,  
 Untok anak jangan di-bërikan.”

Dudok kita berpëlarian,  
 Bërdëkat rumah, dëkat kampong,  
 Boleh minta-mëminta,  
 Akan jëngok-mënjëngok  
 Sakit dan pëning.  
 Sa-jamban sa-përulangan,  
 Sa-përigi sa-përmandian,  
 Sa-laman sa-përmainan;  
 Tanah-nya datar, ayer-nya jërneh,  
 Muafakat-nya ësa.

### III.

Usul-usul, asal-asal!  
 Asal jangan di-tinggalkan:—  
 Hujan berpohon, kata berasal,  
 Sakit bermula, mati bersëbab:—

1. *Katak* is said to = 'short-runged,' as opposed to the wide-runged bamboo ladders of temporary huts.

The jungle chiefs mark off the tree trunks;  
 The Waris drag the cord of survey;  
 The ruler of the shire, the Undang,  
 Settles payment for the portion;  
 The tribal headman hammers landmarks.

Next we see the jungle custom  
 Yield to custom of the hamlet:—  
 Holding dovetailed into holding,  
 Split in lots the ricegrown meadows,  
 Short-runged ladders fixed to houses,  
 Rooms with voice of men resounding.

So the men wax strong in number,  
 And the lands they till grow wider,  
 And the custom of the hamlet  
 Groweth to a broader custom,  
 Stablished custom with set sayings.  
 The grown hath lordship of the little,  
 O'er the grown the old have lordship.

Hark ye then! how say the old men?  
 "The king within his kingdom reigneth,  
 The chief within his shire commandeth,  
 The headman o'er his tribe presideth.  
 Each shall get his share and portion;  
 Take ye not the goods of others;  
 Squander not the children's birthright."

So we gathered close together,  
 Homestead clustering on homestead,  
 Neighbour marrying with neighbour,  
 Visiting in time of sickness;  
 Used one shelter for ablutions,  
 From one well drew bathing water;  
 For our pastimes used one common;  
 Level was our land, our water  
 Clear, and in our village councils  
 Trusted each his neighbour's promise.

### III.

Origin of origins!  
 Desert we not our origin:—  
 Rain hath its fount, tradition its foundation,  
 Sickness hath its beginning, death its cause:

Asal jangan di-tinggalkan.

Ka-laut adat Dato' Tëmënggong,  
Ka-darat adat Dato' Mërpateh.

Ka-laut adat Dato' Tëmënggong:—  
Siapa mënjala, siapa tërjun,  
Siapa salah, siapa bërtimbang;  
Siapa bërutang, siapa mëm bayar;  
Siapa bunoh, siapa këna bunoh.

Ka-darat adat Dato' Mërpateh:—  
Hutang nan bërturut, chagar bërgadai;  
Chinchang pampas, bunoh bëri balas.

Tërbit adat sa-ranah Pagar Ruyong,  
Sa-lilit Pulau Përcha,  
Sa-limbang tanah Mëlayu.  
Sëri Alam di-Minangkabau,  
Sultan di-Pagar Ruyong;  
Titah di-Sungai Tërap;  
Indëra Maha<sup>1</sup> di-Suasa;  
Kali di-Padang Gënting,  
Makhdum di-Sumanik.  
Sengkat durian di-takek raja,  
Si-balong bërlantak bësi<sup>2</sup>;  
Sengkat si-lukah-lukah hanyut,  
Sengkat përentahan Pagar Ruyong.

Sa-jaman Dato' bujang, nenek gadis,—  
Puteh këpala tëtékala itu;  
Gagak puteh, bangau hitam.  
Ayer-nya jërneh, orang-nya ramai,  
Adat sëntosa di-dalam nëgëri.  
Buloh bilah, puntong bërasap,  
Bësi nan bërlocheng.  
Sa-hëlai akar akan përikat,  
Sa-bingkah tanah akan pënggalang.

Këmudian dudok pandang-mëmandang:  
Pandang ka-darat, mëranti yang bërsanggit dahan,  
Pandang ka-hulu gaung nan dalam,  
Pandang ka-hilir sungai nan mëlurut,  
Pandang ka-baroh lëpan nan luas.

1. Jelebu reciters say *Antara mudëk*, which is obviously corrupt.

*Undang-Undang*, Moko-Moko read *أندرها* and romanize it *Inder Mah*: the *Tuan Panjang* of Saruasa is intended: see, for instance, p. 8 of van der Toorn's *Tjindoer Moto* (Batavia, 1886.) At Sungai Trap was the Bendahara.

2. *Vide* note p. 8 *supra*. *Si-balong*=*balong ijanu* "a large tree, *Epiprinus malayanus*."



Forget we not our origin.

To seaward was the custom of Dato Temenggong,  
To landward was the custom of Dato Merpatih.

Now the law of Dato Temenggong to seaward is this,  
Who casts the net shall jump to drag it in;  
Who commits an offence shall compensate;  
Who owes shall pay; who slays shall be slain.

And the law of Dato Merpatih to landward is this:—  
A debt adheres to the tribe of the debtor;  
A mortgage becomes a lien on the tribal land;  
Who wounds shall pay smart money, who kills shall give  
restitution.

The custom arose in Pagar Ruyong,  
It engirdled Pulau Percha,  
It throve in the Malayan regions.  
Glory of Minangkabau,  
Was the Sultan in Pagar Ruyong;  
Mandates issued from Sungai Trap;  
Indra Maha was at Saruasa:  
The Kali was at Padang Gënting,  
The Makhdum in Sumanik.

As far went the custom as the trees,  
The fruit-trees marked by the rāja for his people,  
The trees with spikes to climb for honey  
As far as fish traps drifted,  
Up to the kingdom of Pagar Ruyong.

In days ere our ancestors were wedded,  
When the hair of man was white,  
And crows were white and egrets black;  
Waters were clear and men were many,  
And custom brought peace on the land;  
The bamboo was split, the log smoked in the clearing,  
And the clink of iron was heard,  
The trailing creeper served for binding,  
A turned-up clod for barrier.

Then the folk sat looking about them:—  
Hillward rustled the branches of forest trees;  
Upstream were deep ravines;  
Downstream the flowing river;  
Below the spreading meadows.

Turun di-Pagar Ruyong raja bėrdarah puteh,  
Bėrdua dėngan Batin Mėrgalang;  
Lalu naik gunong Rėmbau,  
Lalu turun Sėri Mėnanti.  
Kėmudian dudok bėrsuku-suku,  
Suku-suku nan dua-bėlas  
Suku nan bėrtua, bėribu-bapa, bėrlėmbaga:  
Kėmudian dudok bėrdėkat kampong,  
Laman sa-buah sa-pėrmainan,  
Jamban sa-buah sa-pėrulangan,  
Pėrigi sa-buah sa-pėrmandian.



There descended in Pagar Ruyong together  
A king of white blood and Batin Mergalang;  
They journeyed and climbed the Rembau hills;  
They passed down to Sri Menanti.  
Then men dwelt there in tribes, the twelve tribes:—  
A tribe has its old men, its elders, and its headman.  
Afterwards their homes grew close together;  
For their games men used one common;  
Used one shelter for their bathing;  
From one well drew their drinking water.



## PĒBILANGAN ADAT.

We are Min-  
angkabau  
folk.

Kita anak Minangkabau,  
Yang di-bawah langit dan di-muka bumi,  
Sa-lingkar Gunong Bĕrapi,  
Sa-hingga Pintu Raya hilir,  
Hingga Si-Lĕgundi mudik,  
Yang bĕrnama tanah Sumatĕra,  
Pulau Andĕlas.

Not till the  
pastoral age  
did we get  
our custom  
of entail.

Sa-bingkah tanah tĕrbalek,  
Sa-hĕlai akar yang putus,  
Sa-batang kayu rĕbah—  
Adat dĕngan pĕsaka bĕlum di-adakan.

and our  
political &  
social  
system;

Tĕtĕkala  
Kampong sudah bĕrsudut,  
Sawah sudah bĕrjinjang,  
Puchok sudah mĕliok,  
Pinang sudah bĕrjijir  
Adat dĕngan pĕsaka di-adakan, ia-itu—  
Alam bĕraja,  
Luak bĕrpĕnghulu,  
Suku bĕrtua  
Anak buah bĕribu-bapa.  
Orang sĕmanda bĕrtĕmpat sĕmanda.<sup>1</sup>

with grades  
and pre-  
cedents

Kunchi bini laki,  
Kunchi sĕmanda tĕmpat sĕmanda,  
Kunchi anak buah ibu bapa,  
Kunchi luak pĕnghulu,  
Kunchi alam raja.

Adat yang bĕrjanjang<sup>2</sup> naik, bĕrtangga turun;<sup>3</sup>  
Bĕrlukis, bĕrlĕmbaga,<sup>4</sup>  
Bĕrtiru,<sup>5</sup> bĕrtĕladan,

and a  
widening  
scope for  
our customs.

Pulai nan bĕrpangkat naik,  
Manusia bĕrpangkat turun.

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes are added:

*Gĕdong bĕrtaukeh, parit bĕrpyang,  
Po bĕrbun, gĕlanggang bĕrjuara.*

'Shops have keepers, mining sluices diviners to open them,  
Gaming tables croupiers, cock-pits trainers of cocks.'

<sup>2</sup> *Janjang* "the steps of a ladder—to the *pĕran* or roof loft."

<sup>3</sup> I.e. Society and the political constitution has different grades. A *titah* will go downwards through the Undang to the Penghulus, through the Penghulus to the Lembagas, through the



## CUSTOMARY SAYINGS.

We are children of Minangkabau,  
 Who dwell beneath the sky and on the face of the earth.  
 Of the land around Gunong Mērapī,  
 As far downstream as Pintu Raya,  
 As far upstream as Si-Lēgundi,  
 The land that is called Sumatra,  
 The island of Andalas.

When the first clod was upturned  
 And the first creeper severed,  
 And the first tree felled—  
 Our custom and system of entail were not yet es-  
 tablished.

When holding was dovetailed into holding,  
 When our stretches of rice-field were made,  
 When the shoots of our plants swayed in the breeze,  
 When our betel-palms grew up in rows  
 Then were established our custom and system of entail.

Our world got a prince,  
 Our shires chieftains,  
 Our tribes elders,  
 Our families headmen,  
 And the married man found a place with the family  
 of his wife.

Warder of the wife is the husband,  
 Warder of the husband his wife's family,  
 Warders of the family its elders,  
 Warder of the shire the chieftain,  
 Warder of the world the king.

Procedure under the Custom is to ascend and descend  
 by grades,  
 As men go up and come down the rungs of ladders.  
 Custom with its lines and patterns,  
 Its precedents and instances.

The *pulai* tree broadens as it grows up,  
 Family trees as they descend.

---

Lembagas to the Buapas; and a petition to royalty should go upwards through the same stages. *Vide* "Adatrechtbundel, VI." p. 205-6, where a far-fetched interpretation is condemned and one similar to that accepted in N. S. upheld.

<sup>4</sup> *Lēmbaga* = 'mould, matrix, pattern,' and the context shows clearly that it has that meaning here.

<sup>5</sup> Minangkabau *pēpatah* read *bērtiru*, which we have adopted. The Jelebu reading is *bērturis*. For "Rembau's" *bērturas*, no support can be found in Minangkabau *pēpatah* or Van der Toorn's "Woordenboek."

Each individual in our society has his peculiar duty,

Kambing biasa mēmbebek,  
 Kērbau biasa mēnguak,  
 Ayam biasa bērkokok,  
 Murai biasa bērkichau,  
 Pēnghulu biasa mēnghukumkan adat,  
 Alim biasa mēnghukumkan shara',  
 Hulubalang biasa mēnjarah,  
 Juara biasa mēlēpas,  
 Saudagar biasa bērmain bungkal tēraju,  
 Pērēmpuan biasa bērusahakan bēnang dan kapas

which none may usurp;

Raja sa-kēadilan,  
 Pēnghulu sa-undang,  
 Tua sa-lēmbaga,  
 Waris sa-pēsaka,  
 Ibu- bapa sa-adat,  
 Tēmpat sēmanda satu shahadat,  
 Orang sēmanda sa-rēsam.<sup>1</sup>

and his prerogatives

Raja bērdaulat,  
 Pēnghulu bērandika;  
 Raja bērtitah,  
 Pēnghulu bērsabda;  
 Raja bērkhalifah,  
 Pēnghulu bērsuku.  
 Undang bērkēlantasan,  
 Lēmbaga bērsēkat.  
 Raja bērsējarah,  
 Pēnghulu bērsalasilah,  
 Lēmbaga bērtēromba.

and honour in his own place.

Raja bērdaulat dalam alam-nya,  
 Pēnghulu bērnobat dalam suku-nya,  
 Buapa bērnobat dalam anak-buah-nya,  
 Orang banyak bērnobat dalam tērata-nya.

Obedience to whom obedience is due.

Salah hamba ka-pada tuan,  
 Salah murid ka-pada guru,  
 Salah anak ka-pada bapa,  
 Salah bini ka-pada laki.

Titah di-junjong sa-pēnoh-pēnoh kēpala,  
 Sabda di-pikul sa-untok-untok bahu.

Covenant makes men of one mind.

Kēlēbehan umat dēngan muafakat,  
 Kēlēbehan nabi dēngan makjizat;  
 Bulat ayer karna pēmatong,<sup>2</sup>  
 Bulat manusia karna muafakat.

<sup>1</sup> I.e. the *adat pinang-mēminang*.

<sup>2</sup> At Sri Menanti *gopong* 'a coconut-shell water vessel' takes the place of *pēmatong*.

Goats are wont to bleat,  
 Buffaloes to low,  
 Cocks to crow,  
 Magpie-robins to whistle,  
 Chiefs to administer customary law,  
 Religious authorities Muhamadan law,  
 Captains to make raids,  
 Trainers to fly cocking-cocks,  
 Traders to finger weights and measures,  
 Women to be busy with cotton and thread.

The king carries out his justice,  
 The chief his law,  
 The tribal headman his ancestral rights,  
 The inheritors their entail,  
 Heads of families their custom,  
 The bride's kin their sworn profession,  
 The husband his conventions.

A king is sacrosanct,  
 A chief honourable.  
 A king issues mandates,  
 A chief commands.

A king is God's deputy,  
 A chief his tribe's<sup>1</sup>.  
 The powers of a chief are wide,  
 The powers of a tribal headman restricted.  
 A king has his royal annals,  
 A chief his genealogical tree,  
 A tribal headman his song of origin.

The king is sacrosanct within his realm,  
 The chief receives recognition within his tribes,  
 The heads of families within their dependants,  
 Common folks in their own homes.

Slaves can offend against their masters,  
 Pupils against their teachers,  
 Children against parents,  
 Wives against husbands.

We lift our hands high in homage to execute the  
 king's mandates.

We put our shoulders to carry out a chief's commands.

The greatness of men lies in taking counsel together;  
 The greatness of prophets in performing miracles.  
 As a bamboo conduit makes a round jet of water,  
 So taking counsel together rounds men to one mind.

---

<sup>1</sup> Or ? "rules his tribe."

Custom is based on covenant.

Tětəkala kěchil bėrnama muafakat,  
Tětəkala bėsar bėrnama adat:  
Si-raja adat ka-pada muafakat.  
Ayer mėlurut dėngan bandar-nya,  
Bėnar mėlurut dėngan pakat-nya,  
Nėgėri bėrtumbuh dėngan adat-nya.

But covenant alone may be partial.

Muafakat lalu di-dalam gėlap,  
Adat lalu di-tėngah tėrang.  
Hilang adat karna muafakat.

We live secure in the lap of our custom:

Hidup di-kandong adat,  
Mati di-kandong bumi.

and transgression breaks the transgressor.

Bujur lalu, lintang patah:  
Makanan adat dėngan pėsaka.

Custom speaks with the voice of greatest authority:

Kata orang kata bėrchalun,<sup>1</sup> kata bėrbalok.  
Kata pėgawai kata bėrubong.  
Kata hulubalang kata tunggal.  
Kata undang kata pėrhiasan.  
Kata raja kata bėrliput.  
Kata maalim<sup>2</sup> kata hakikat.  
Kata adat kata yang bėnar.

prescribing the way we must follow,

Ka-laut mėnuju alur;  
Ka-darat mėnuju bėnar;  
Bėrtahun mėnuju musim,  
Kalau ta' mėnuju alur, tumpat karam;  
Ka-darat ta' mėnuju bėnar, siar bakar;  
Bėrtahun ta' mėnuju musim, sambang hangus.

and our attitude to life;

Bėrdiri mėninjau jarah,  
Dudok mėraut ranjau,  
Mėnyėrodok galas lalu,  
Mėnyėlam minum ayer,  
Lain bidok lain galang.

and reminding us of the penalties of folly.

Kaki tėrdorong, badan binasa;  
Chėpat tangan, dapat utang;  
Mulut tėrkata-kata, ėmas pada;  
Tėrpijak bėnang arang, hitam tapak.

<sup>1</sup> "Disputatious."

<sup>2</sup> Jelebu reads *ilmu*, obviously a corruption of the usual Minangkabau version, which we have adopted.



What in the beginning are covenants  
 Grow up into customs:  
 Custom is lord over covenants.  
 Water proceeds along water-ways,  
 Sanction proceeds from covenant;  
 A country grows up with its customs.

Covenants proceed in the dark,  
 Custom walks in the light:  
 Covenants can destroy custom.

In life we are lapped in custom,  
 In death we are lapped in the earth.

Length-ways one gets through, cross-wise broken.  
 Our custom of entail is our sustenance.

The words of common folk are contentious,  
 The words of officials weighed,  
 The words of captains terse,  
 The words of chiefs elaborate,  
 The words of the ruler comprehensive,  
 The words of the wise true,  
 The words of the custom sanctioned.

At sea aim for the channel,  
 On land aim at the sanctioned way,  
 For planting-rice, at the due season.  
 Miss the channel and your boat founders,  
 Miss the sanctioned way and you get burnt,  
 Miss the season and your crop is parched and fails.

Stand up to look out for raiders,  
 Sit down to whittle a stake,  
 Stoop to get your shoulder-wallet through,  
 Put your mouth in the stream to drink water.  
 Suit your rollers to your boat.

A slip brings destruction,  
 An open hand debts,  
 A quick tongue fines.  
 Tread on pitch and your sole is defiled.

Custom  
comprises  
three  
branches:—

- (1) the law  
of nature,
- (2) the law  
of man,
- (3) the law  
of God.

Its function  
is different  
from that  
of Muham-  
nadan law.

And the  
evidence re-  
quired by it  
is different.

Custom  
accepts cir-  
cumstantial  
evidence of  
theft

Keputusan adat tiga perkara:—

Pertama adat mansiang<sup>1</sup> ia-itu terjali,

Kedua adat tiang ia-itu adat berkėbulatan,

Ketiga adat kitabu'llah ia-itu hukum Kuran

Pada adat mēnghilangkan yang burok,

Mēnimbulkan yang baik;

Pada shara' mēnyuroh bėrbuat baik,

Mēninggalkan bėrbuat jahat.

Adat bėrsėndi hukum,

Hukum bėrsėndi kitabu'llah.

Kuat adat, ta' gadoh hukum,

Kuat hukum, ta' gadoh adat.

Ibu hukum muafakat,

Ibu adat muafakat.

Adat bėrtanda, hukum bėrsaksi;

Adat yang tiba ka-gėlap mēnjala,

Tiba ka-tėrang mēnumpu;

Tinggi di-sigai,

Kėras di-takek,

Lėmbut di-sudu.

Sah, kata adat,

Apa-bila tėrtanda, tėrbeti;

Tėrkėjar, tėrlėlah;

Tėrpakok, tėrpauk;

Dėkat, tėrtunjokkan;

Jauh, tėrkatakan.

Undang-undang churi:

Undang dua-bėlas—

Undang tėrpalang,<sup>2</sup> dinding tėrėtas,

Undang tėrkėjar tėrlėlah,

Undang tėrampas,

Undang tėrchinchang tėrpakok,

Di-gėdabang, di-gėdabekkan,<sup>3</sup>

Di-sėrang, di-kėlėkai,

Nama kinchang kichoh,

Bėranggur, kalak-kalak,<sup>4</sup>

Tiga kali ėmpat sa-puloh dua.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. *Patah tumbuh* 'when an officer dies, a successor must be chosen' is *adat mansiang*: *hilang bėrganti* 'if an officer vanishes, another must be chosen in his place' is *adat tiang*—for if a man goes into the forest and does not return, it is presumed by the *adat tiang* that he is dead.—A.C.

Custom may be split into three branches:—

Custom clear as the triangular rush in a rice-field,  
 Custom strong and round as a pillar, whereon all men  
     agree,  
 Custom laid down in God's book, the law of the Koran.  
 It is for custom to suppress the wrong,  
 To bring the good to pass.  
 It is for religious Law to command righteousness  
 And bid men eschew evil.

Customary law hinges on religious law,  
 Religious law on the word of God.  
 If custom is strong, religion is not upset;  
 If religion is strong, custom is not upset.  
 Religious law is the offspring of covenant,  
 Customary law also the offspring of covenant.

Customary law requires signs of guilt,  
 Religious law calls for witnesses.  
 When customary law deals with circumstances obscure,  
 It throws a wide net to catch the offender;  
 In clear cases it has a sure footing;  
 If the problem be high, it uses a ladder,  
 If it be hard, it cleaves into it,  
 If it be soft, it ladles.  
 'There is a clear case' says custom,  
 When there is evidence of guilt and information laid,  
 When a man is chased from the scene of the crime and  
     is found panting;  
 When there are hacks and cuts;  
 If evidence be at hand, it requires to be shown it,  
 If it be not at hand, it requires it to be related.

By the laws for theft  
 Twelve circumstances are forbidden:  
 To set a strut against a house-pillar, to rip open a  
     partition;  
 To be chased and caught panting;  
 To be found with booty snatched or stolen by force;  
 To be found wounded and hacked;  
 To be found with fluttering heart or trampled foot-  
     prints;  
 To be convicted of swindling and cheating;  
 To have transplanted and to give a crooked story,  
 For  $3 \times 4 = 10 + 2$ ,  
 (And these twelve signs are circumstantial evidence).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "Adatrechtbundel" VI, p. 398.

<sup>3, 4</sup> The translation is doubtful.

and of all  
crimes, so  
that men  
must walk  
warily.

A criminal  
leaves traces  
of his crime  
and cannot  
explain his  
movements.

'Where  
there is  
smoke, there  
is fire'—  
that is one  
of our legal  
maxims.

We seek  
for perfect  
justice,

and fair  
sentences,  
deterrent  
but not  
vindictive

Application  
must be  
made to the  
proper  
tribunal.

Different  
cases must  
be tried

Ēnggang lalu, ranting patah.  
Mara hinggap, mara terbang.  
Lalu hangus, surut layu.  
Tērgesek kēna miang,  
Tērgēgar kēna ěmbun

Bērsurih ba' si-pasin,<sup>1</sup>  
Bērlondar ba' langkitang,  
Bērbau ba' machang.  
Ka-hulu ta' tēntu gaung-nya,  
Ka-hilir ta' tēntu kualā.

Mana anjing mēnyalak, di-situ biawak mēmanjat;  
Mana tēmiang tērentak, di-situ tanam-tanaman jadi;  
Mana kayu tumbang, di-situ chēndawan tumbuh  
Kilat bēliong ka-pada kaki,  
Kilat pisau ka-pada tangan,

Chupak yang pēpat,  
Gantang yang piawi,  
Bongkal yang bētul,  
Tēraju yang baik,<sup>2</sup>  
Tiada boleh di-aleh lagi.

Tiba di-mata, jangan di-lēlapkan;  
Tiba di-pērut, jangan di-kēmpiskan.  
Ular di-palu biar mati,  
Kayu pēmalu jangan patah,  
Tanah di-palu jangan limbang,  
Lēmah liat kayu akar,  
Di-lēntok mau, di-patah jangan.

Mēnumbok di-lēsong,  
Bērtanak di-pēriok,<sup>3</sup>

Ka-pada raja  
Hari malam, bulan (?) bērsirau,  
Kērbau bērlaga dalam kandang

Ka-pada undang  
Ayam hitam terbang malam,  
Hinggap kayu bērdaun.

Ka-pada lēmbaga  
Ayam puteh terbang siang,  
Hinggap kayu mēranting.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Adatrechtbundel" VI, p. 445.

<sup>2</sup> Malay casuists distinguish four points in these four lines =  
(1) = if the bench of judges be full (2) = if they have full

The branch breaks, as the horn-bill passes.  
 Where danger alighted, danger must fly away.  
 Pass through flames and you are scorched,  
 Retreat from them and you wilt.  
 Rub against the stem of a bamboo and you itch,  
 Shake it and you are sprayed with moisture.

Crime leaves its trail like a water-beetle,  
 Like a snail, it leaves its slime;  
 Like a horse-mango, it leaves its reek.  
 A stream that knows not its source nor its mouth,—  
 Like that is a man who cannot account for his doings.

A spot where a dog barks is the spot where the iguana  
 climbs,  
 A spot where the bamboos are uprooted, is a spot where  
 plants flourish,  
 A fallen tree is the place for mushrooms to grow.  
 The glint of an adze falls on a man's feet,  
 The glint of a knife on his hands.

The quart measure that is full,  
 The gallon measure that is true,  
 The weight that is just,  
 The scales that are even,  
 These cannot be upset.

What comes before your eyes—be not blind to it;  
 What comes to your mouth,—get fat on it.  
 If you strike a snake, kill;  
 But let not your stick be broken  
 Nor the ground dented by your blow;  
 Pliant but strong is a rattan,  
 Let it bend but not break.

Pound in a mortar,  
 Cook rice in a pot.  
 It is a case for the ruler's court,  
 When at night in the dark of the moon  
 Buffaloes fight in the byre.

It is a case for the chief's court,  
 When a black fowl flying by night  
 Settles in a leafy tree.

It is a case for the tribal headman's court,  
 When a white fowl flying by day  
 Settles on a leafless twig.

---

authority (3) = if the weight of evidence is sufficient (4) =  
 if the judges are just.—A.C.

<sup>3</sup> These lines imply that complaints must be laid before the  
 proper court and also that the punishment must fit the crime.



and different  
punish-  
ments im-  
posed by  
different  
officers.

Tali pëngikat dari-pada lëmbaga,  
Këris pënyalang dari-pada undang,  
Pëdang mëmanchong dari-pada këadilan.  
Tikam ta' bërtanya,  
Panchong ta' bërkhabar.

The raja's  
power is  
almost un-  
limited.

Hukuman raja  
Ënam-puloh ënam kupang,  
Tujoh tahil, sa-paha,  
Sa-këndi, sa-këndëri,  
Sa-isi lësong pësok,  
Sa-ruas buloh tëlång,  
Sa-kochong lëngan baju.<sup>1</sup>

Crimes  
against  
custom  
are—

Dahaga dahagi,<sup>2</sup>  
Sumbang, salah,<sup>3</sup>  
Rëbut, rampas,  
Siar, bakar,  
Maling, churi,  
Kichang, kichoh,<sup>4</sup>  
Upas,<sup>5</sup> rachun,  
Tikam, bunoh,<sup>6</sup>  
Samun, sakal,—  
Pantang ka-pada adat.

and certain  
evidence  
admittedly  
conclusive.

Upas rachun, sisa makan.

The penal-  
ties for  
wounding  
and for  
homicide.

Chinchang pampas;<sup>7</sup> bunoh bëri balas,  
Anak di-panggil makan,  
Anak buah di-sorong 'kan balas.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Muar the following lines are added:—  
*Sa-gantang ulang-aling,*  
*Sa-pëting tali bajak.*

<sup>2</sup> "Opposition to and uproar against constituted authority"  
—Willinek, p. 847 and Van der Toorn's "Woordenboek." *Dër-  
haka chëlaka*, which often precedes this line in N. S. is a  
paraphrase of it.

<sup>3</sup> *Salah* = *sësalahan* "fornication" and is reckoned constant-  
ly as a separate crime in Minangkabau lists of *salah dua-puloh*.

<sup>4</sup> *Kinchang* and *kichang* both occur: *v.* Van der Toorn's  
"Woordenboek." For *kichong* some Minangkabau MSS. read  
*lanchong* and explain it as including "embezzlement" unlike  
*kichoh* which means all other forms of "swindling."

<sup>5</sup> *Upas* = drugging with intent to render senseless but not to  
kill.

<sup>6</sup> *Bunoh* embraces wilful murder, culpable homicide, and  
accidental homicide.

The cord of arrest is the prerogative of the tribal head-  
man,

The creese of execution the prerogative of the chief,  
The headman's sword the prerogative of the king.

The extent of a raja's jurisdiction is—

Cents sixty and six,

Seven taels, one *paha*,

One *kěndi*, one *candareen*,

The contents of a tiny mortar,

As much as a joint of giant bamboo can hold,

As much as will fill the sleeve of a coat.

Lese-majesté and disorder,

Irregular marriage and wenching,

Stealing by force and snatching,

Arson and burning,

Privy theft and open pilfering,

Swindling and cheating,

Drugging and poisoning,

Stabbing and slaying,

Robbery with violence, robbery with wounding,—

These are forbidden by custom.

To test drugs or poison, give the remnants of the dish  
to the suspect.

For wounding smart-money is the penalty,

For slaying the substitution of a person to the dead  
person's tribe.

The children of the murderer are invited to the feast  
of atonement,

And one of his tribal kin given to the tribe of the  
murdered man.

<sup>7</sup> Restitution was in ratio to the amount of blood shed. If the man wounded lost little blood, a fowl was given by his assailant, if much a goat: it was thought that no man could lose more than a goat's measure of blood and live. The animal was cooked and the flesh presented to the aggrieved party. The offender took half a cupful of blood of the animal slain, a handful of rice and three limes. He took the injured party to a stream or well and anointed his head first with blood, then with rice and finally with juice of the limes to cleanse away the unsavoury chrism of blood and rice!—A.C.

<sup>8</sup> "The nephew is offered as a substitute," Rembau, p. 112. This rendering is not clear. It could never be the child of the murderer's wife's sister or of the murderer's brother: but always the child of one of his female blood relations. The point is that the substitute must be of the murderer's own tribe.

An offence against marriage law.	Pëlësit dua sa-kampong, <sup>1</sup> Ēnau sa-batang dua sigai Mata tumbuh tiada bërĕneh, <sup>2</sup> Sumbang ka-pada tabiat. Adat mĕnuju ka-pada tanda. Bila "Sah" kata adat tiang, Janggal ta' boleh di-patoh lagi, Salah ta' boleh di-lukum: <sup>3</sup> Ia-itu suatu di-bĕri, dua di-ambil.
Penalties of illicit love.	Tĕrkurong mati, Tĕrtanda bĕrutang.
Offences against public justice.	Kĕpantangan adat, Di-lindong di-ĕndapkan. Kĕpĕjatian adat, Di-tĕrang di-bandingkan.
Custom fixes the heritage of each section of the com- munity.	Jalan raya, titian batu, Bukit bukau, <sup>4</sup> Rimba yang sunyi, Gaung yang dalam, Lĕpan yang lebar, Bandar yang sundai, <sup>5</sup> Si-barau-barau yang punya. Lubok dalam si-kitang-kitang yang punya. Gaung guntong, Bukit bukau Waris dan pĕnghulu yang punya. Sawah yang bĕrĭnjang, Pinang yang gayu, <sup>6</sup> Nyiur yang saka, Lĕmbaga yang punya. Anak buah yang bĕrchalun, Ibu-bapa yang punya. Orang sĕmanda yang gadoh bĕrsuarang, Anak buah yang punya. Lingkongan bĕndul yang ĕmpat, Orang sĕmanda yang punya. Jalan raya titian batu, Raja yang ĕmpunya.

<sup>1</sup> This, like the next line, signifies union with another woman of the same tribe as one's wife during her life. "Rembau," p. 79 states that the offence is "classed together with the possession of a *pĕlĕsit* as *pantang*":—the authors may have been thinking of some other saying, as our lines, which give the only version known in Jelebu and Johol, cannot be so construed.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. 'bastards.'

Two familiar spirits in one household,  
 Two ladders to one sugar-palm,  
 Sprouts without seed  
 Are offences against morals.  
 Custom looks for signs of guilt;  
 When custom declares the offence proved,  
 It is not a peccadillo to be mildly corrected.  
 Nor can recourse be had to religious law—  
 For this crime of taking two brides when a man has  
 been given one.

Trapped with his mistress, the intriguer is done for;  
 Leave his trace in her house and he will be fined.

It is forbidden by custom  
 To conceal and abet.  
 It is approved by custom  
 To bring to light and compare facts.

The high way with its stepping stones,  
 Hills and hill-bases,  
 Lonely forest,  
 Deep ravines,  
 Broad plains,  
 Sloping water-courses  
 Belong to the birds.  
 Deep pools  
 To the fishes.  
 Ravines and valleys,  
 Hills and hill-bases  
 Belong to the territorial tribe and their chief.  
 Stretches of rice-field,  
 Old betel-nut palms,  
 Ancestral coconuts  
 Belong to the tribal headmen.  
 Disputes among their families  
 Are the province of the elders.  
 When a husband disputes about the property acquired  
 by his own and his wife's joint labour  
 It is the province of his family.  
 Within the four threshold-beams of his house  
 Is a husband's province.  
 The high road with its stepping stones  
 Belongs to the king.

<sup>3</sup> *Patoh* "to press softly, firmly e.g. of binding thatching on to bamboo lathes; fig. to render submissive; *mëmatoh orang jo lunak nan elok* 'to bend a person to one's will gentleness is the best course'"—Van der Toorn.

<sup>4</sup> *Bukau* 'a hill base, land-locked basin, wide gorge' has been corrupted in Rembau into *bakau* 'mangrove' ("Rembau," p. 104 XVI).

<sup>5</sup> 'Sloping'—Van der Toorn's "Woordenboek."

<sup>6</sup> 'Old of persons and trees,' *id.*

Jalan rayat titian batang  
 Waris yang ėmpunya.  
 Jalan paya titian pĕrmatang,  
 Lĕmbaga yang ėmpunya.

It conserves  
 communal  
 rights:

Ĕmbun sa-titek di-lautkan,  
 Tanah sa-buku di-gunongkan;—  
 Yang dalam adat dan aturan.

and enjoins  
 the care of  
 property.

Padi ta' bĕrpagar langang,  
 Kĕrbau ta' bĕrkandang sĕladang.

It lays down  
 conditions  
 of entail,

Pĕsaka  
 Yang bĕrsĕsapan,<sup>1</sup> yang bĕrjĕrami,  
 Bĕrtunggul, bĕrpĕmarasan.

and for the  
 transfer of  
 entail.

Sah batal ka-pada sa-kadim;  
 Kata bĕrchari ka-pada waris-nya;  
 Tinggal waris mĕnongkat;  
 Tinggal sa-kadim mĕlintang;  
 Tinggal harta bĕrtuan ta' jadi;  
 Tinggal tua batal.<sup>2</sup>

Under the  
 matriarchal  
 system,  
 males are  
 elected to  
 tribal offices.

Tĕrbit pĕsaka ka-pada saka;<sup>3</sup>  
 Si-laki-laki mĕnyandang pĕsaka:  
 Si-pĕrĕmpuan yang punya pĕsaka,  
 Orang sĕmanda yang mĕmbĕla.

An office  
 never dies.  
 Rules of  
 election.

Patah tumbuh; hilang bĕrganti.<sup>4</sup>

Ganti hidup bĕrkĕredlaan,  
 Ganti mati bĕrkĕbulatan.<sup>5</sup>  
 Kĕbulatan anak buah mĕmbuat atau mĕmĕchat buapa;  
 Buapa bulat, waris-nya rapat, mĕmbuat atau mĕmĕchat  
 tua;

<sup>1</sup> *Sĕsapan* "abandoned land"—Adatrechtbundel VI, p. 406.  
 A Minangkabau saying runs:—

*Sa-saso, sa-jĕrami,*  
*Sa-ladang, sa-sawah,*  
*Sa-hutan tinggi, sa-hutan rĕndah,*  
*Sa-pandan, sa-pĕrkuburan*

—Willinek, p. 381. Jelebu Malays explain the above saying as referring especially to graveyards; perhaps a reminiscence of this Minangkabau saw, which is no longer known in Jelebu. "Rembau" (p. 110 XXX) renders it "The waters of the pool and cataract are one"—a sentence unintelligible in the context and involving *bĕr...* a formative equally unintelligible here. For *sa-pandan* a N. S. variant is *bĕrpĕndam*.

<sup>2</sup> "Rembau" (p. 112, XXXIX) states that this saying is quoted "generally" in reference to the ceremony of adoption. In Jelebu and Johol, it is quoted very frequently in reference to alienation of *tanah pĕsaka* to one outside the tribe; but



The Sakai path with its tree-trunk bridges  
 Belongs to the tribe that owns the soil.  
 The path over the knolls in the swamps  
 Belongs to the tribal headmen.

We take the dew-drop and mix it with our sea;  
 We take the clod of earth and mix it in the mountain:  
 That is the arrangement of the custom.

Rice-crops unfenced become waste grass;  
 Buffaloes unpent become wild cattle.

Idle fallow, land with stubble,  
 Land with tree-stumps left by the feller,  
 Land that has been levelled—  
 These can be inherited, (—for they bear evidence of  
 occupation).

The woman's nearest of kin can approve or prevent;  
 The full members of the woman's tribe elect to find the  
 money;

If there are full members of her tribe, they can sub-  
 scribe to save the tail;

If there are next of kin, they can bar the sale;  
 If the property in question has an owner already, the  
 sale cannot proceed.

The tribal headman can quash the sale.

Our heritage comes from our women;  
 Men wear the insignia of hereditary office;  
 The inheritance belongs to the woman,  
 The man cherishes it.

What is broken, grows: what is lost replaced.

If a chief retires, he can suggest his successor.

If a chief dies, election by the common voice is re-  
 quired.

A family by common consent can elect or dismiss its  
 elder;

Elders by their common consent and with the support  
 of enfranchised members of the tribe can elect or  
 dismiss a tribal headman,

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there, too, can refer to the preliminaries of adoption and of  
 substitution in the case of murder.

<sup>3</sup> In *adat* sayings, *saka* = "female line of descent," *baka*  
 "the male line."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Newbold's "Malacca," II p. 107.

<sup>5</sup> Other sayings are current in Johol and Jelebu:—

*Ganti hidup, bĕrkĕgĕlaran,*

*Ganti mati, bĕrkĕgiliran,*

which means that a *pĕmangku* may be of the same *pĕrut* and  
 in fact the nominee of the retiring chief—provided the tribe  
 does not object; while on the death of a chief, the rotation  
 among the *pĕrut* must be observed:

*Pĕchat hidup, bĕrkĕredlaan,*

*Pĕchat mati, bĕrkĕrapatan,*

which has the same import.

Kěbulatan tua, boleh mēmbuat atau mēmēchat undang;  
Undang bulat, lēmbaga rapat, waris sēdia, mēmbuat  
atau mēmēchat raja.<sup>1</sup>

Penalties  
for abuse of  
office.

Di-anjak layu, di-chabut mati,<sup>2</sup>  
Kata adat dēngan pēsaka.

Conditions  
for  
betrothal.

Adat tidak mēlintang  
Hukum tidak mēngambek,<sup>3</sup>  
Boleh sēmanda-mēnyēmanda.  
Bila bērsēmanda di-mana-mana suku,  
Sah kata adat,  
Ayer di-sauk, ranting di-patah.

The married  
man serves  
his wife's  
tribe.

Orang sēmanda bērtēmpat sēmanda.  
Jika chērdek, tēman bērunding;<sup>4</sup>  
Jika bodoh, di-suroh di-arah.  
Tinggi banir,<sup>5</sup> tēmpat bērlindung,  
Rimbun dahan, tēmpat bērnaung.  
Orang sēmanda pērgi karna suroh,  
Bērhēnti karna tēgah.

which uses  
him accord-  
ing to his  
qualifica-  
tions.

Jikalau kita mēnērima orang sēmanda;  
Jikalau kuat di-bubohkan di-pangkal kayu;  
Jikalau bingong di-suroh arah,  
Mēnyēput nan jauh, mēngamponkan nan dēkat;  
Jikalau ia chērdek, hēndakkan rundingan;  
Jikalau maalim, hēndakkan doa-nya;  
Jikalau kaya, hēndakkan ēmas;  
Jikalau patah, pēnghalau ayam;  
Jikalau buta, pēnghēmbus lēsong;  
Jikalau pēkak, pēmbakar bēdil.

Masok ka-kandang kērbau mēnguak;  
Masok ka-kandang kambing mēmbebek,  
Bagai-mana adat tēmpat sēmanda di-pakai;  
Bila bumi di-pijak, langit di-junjong,  
Bagai-mana adat nēgēri itu di-pakai.  
Orang sēmanda dēngan orang tēmpat sēmanda,  
Bagai mēntimun dēngan durian:  
Mēnggolek pun luka, kēna golek pun luka.

<sup>1</sup> This last line contains a special reference to local Jelebu history. Jelebu, like Rembau, has the saying *Raja tiada mēmpunyai nēgēri dan tiada boleh mēnichukai khērajat, mēlainkan bērkādilan sahaja sērta pērmakanan-nya.* "Rembau," p. 110 translates *khērajat* "war-levy," but why? In Arabie it means, "land-tax," and that fits the context exactly. In N. S. the phrase *khērajat mati* is always used of "funeral expenses." *Bērkādilan* = "possessed of the powers of a justiceiar."

<sup>2</sup> "Transplanted it (the custom) withers, uprooted it dies" (Rembau, p. 100, VIII.) The saying is also used of the dismissal of a chief from office, and of removing an offender from the path of evil or eradicating him from the tribe.

The tribal headmen by common consent can elect or dismiss a chief.

The chiefs by common consent and with the support of the tribal headmen can elect or dismiss the king.

What is transplanted withers, what is uprooted dies:  
Is a saying of our hereditary custom.

When custom does not obstruct,

Nor religion prevent,

One can marry and give in marriage.

When a man marries into any tribe,

It is clear, says custom,

He becomes a drawer of water and hewer of wood.

When a man marries and goes to his wife's family,

He will be a friend in council, if clever;

If foolish, he will be ordered about.

A tall man, he will be as a sheltering buttress;

Prosperous he will be as a well-laden branch that gives shade

The married man must go, when he is bid

And halt, when he is forbid.

When we receive a man as a bridegroom,

If he is strong, he shall be our champion;

If a fool, he will be ordered about

To invite guests distant and collect guests near;

Clever and we'll invite his counsel;

Learned and we'll ask his prayers;

Rich and we'll use his gold;

If lame, he shall scare chicken,

If blind, he shall pound the mortar,

If deaf, he shall fire our salutes.

If you enter a byre, low;

If you enter a goat's pen, bleat;

Follow the customs of your wife's family.

When you tread the soil of a country and live beneath its sky,

Follow the customs of that country.

A bridegroom among his bride's relations

Is like a cucumber among *durian* fruit;

If he rolls against them, he is hurt,

And he is hurt, if they roll against him.

<sup>3</sup> = *mēnghambat*.

<sup>4</sup> "If he is clever, I will try to cajole him" (Rembau, p. 116 XLVII). "Rembau" accepted this translation from Mr. Hale, who had excuse for rendering *tēman* "I," as he had been a Perak officer. *Tēman* is a Perak and not a N. S. word for "I," and *bērunding* does not mean "cajole."

<sup>5</sup> *Tinggi banir* and *rimbun dahan* do not necessarily imply one and the same person ("Rembau," p. 117 XLVII): they contrast the strong man and the rich man.

His wife's  
tribe con-  
trols and  
protects him  
in business.

Kusut mēnyələsaikan,  
Chichir mēmungut, hilang mēnchari,  
Utang mēmbayar, piutang mēnėrimakan  
Oleh tēmpat sēmanda.

Bride-  
grooms  
differ in  
type.

Pėrtama orang sēmanda sahaja,  
Kėdua orang sēmanda bapa budak,  
Kėtiga orang sēmanda langau ijau,  
Kėmpat orang sēmanda kumbang jantan,  
Kėlima orang sēmanda alas tēmpat sēmanda.

Custom has  
fixed rules  
for division  
of property  
on divorce.

Chari bahagi,<sup>1</sup>  
Dapatan tinggal,  
Pėmbawa kėmbali,  
Kutu di-bėlah,  
Suarang<sup>2</sup> di-ageh,  
Rugi laba pulang ka-tēmpat sēmanda,  
Nyawa darah pulang ka-pada waris.

The educa-  
tion of  
children,

Bila mēngadakan anak,  
Kalau laki-laki, di-sėrah mēngaji;  
Kalau pėrėmpuan, di-sėrah mēnjahit.  
Masa itu tėrhutang-lah orang sēmanda,  
Pėtang mēngandangan,  
Pagi mėlėpaskan;  
Di-jaga ayam,  
Jangan di-makan musang,  
Kėrbau jangan mėrompak.  
Bila baligh anak itu,  
Yang pėrėmpuan masa-masa-nya di-nanti-nantikan,  
Masa-masa-nya di-adang-adangkan untong-nya,  
Yang laki-laki masa-masa-nya di-chari-charikan,  
Masa-masa-nya di-adang-adangkan untong-nya;  
Ia-itu

until  
marriage.

Gamit yang bėrkėchapi  
Risek yang bėrdasus<sup>3</sup>  
(Sa-umpama barang kali ada yang bėrhajat yang mēm-  
bėli-nya.)

<sup>1</sup> Some interpreters distinguish this line from the fifth as our translation does: others explain that *chari* refers to land and *suarang* to other property. I think there is little doubt that the first line is a N. S. paraphrase for the Minangkabau terms of the fifth line, and that the two lines are identical and refer to joint earnings of husband and wife. Line 5 always takes the place of line 1 in real Minangkabau *pėpatah* and line 1 does not occur. <sup>2</sup> Cf. note 1, p. 30. "Rembau" reads *bėrsaorangan*, obviously corrupt, because *bėr*.....*an* is a plural formative and *sa*—a singular and their conjunction unthinkable: *pėrsuarangan* is a Minangkabau form common in N. S. Jelebu pundits take *kutu* to mean 'lice' and the phrase *kutu di-bėlah* to imply that even the parasites on the persons of those seeking a divorce must be split in half, presumably a last occasion

To unravel disputes,  
 To pick up the fallen and search for the lost,  
 To pay debts and receive dues  
 Is the business of a man's wife's family.

Sons-in-law are of five kinds,  
 First the mere son-in-law;  
 Secondly the father of children for the tribe;  
 Thirdly the green fly that leaves his sting (and deserts  
 his pregnant mate),  
 Fourthly the bee that sips from every flower,  
 Fifthly the bulwark of his wife's relations.

Earnings by husband or wife during marriage are  
 given to him or her who has earned them;  
 What a man has got by his wife remains with her tribe;  
 What the husband brought goes back to him;  
 Property in partnership is split up;  
 The common property acquired by a man and wife's  
 joint labour is equally divided;  
 Any loss or profit on the wife's estate is a matter  
 for her tribe  
 The man's person is restored to his own tribe.

When we get children,  
 Boys must be set to learn their letters  
 Girls must be set to sew.  
 At that time it is the duty of the mother's relations  
 To gather the children to the fold in the evening  
 And to let them loose in the morning.  
 They must guard the chicks  
 Lest the civet devour them;  
 They must keep the young buffaloes from prowling.  
 And when the children come to years of discretion,  
 The girls will be sometimes awaited  
 And sometimes will be hawked about as brides  
 And the boys sometimes will be sought in marriage,  
 And sometimes will be hawked about as suitors.  
 And then  
 There will be fingers twitching  
 And lips whispering over the bargain  
 As when perchance folk have set their hearts on a  
 purchase.

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of familiarity! Willinck (p. 629) found Sumatran pundits taking the same view. "Rembau," p. 114 translates "while at one, share alike," an impossible rendering because *bēlah* = 'divide,' not 'share.' Our translation is that of Johol and of Dutch scholars.

<sup>3</sup> Humphreys reads *bērlusus* (Journal 72, p. 30) but *bērdasus* is the form used in Jelebu and Johol and seems to be correct: *vide* Van der Toorn.



The  
marriage  
contract.

Bila dapat di-orang sĕmanda  
Di-bawa ka-tĕmpat sĕmanda,  
Bila dapat di-tĕmpat sĕmanda  
Di-bawa ka-orang sĕmanda.

Bila sah sa-kata,  
Tanda di-tĕrima,  
Di-kĕmbangkan dari sa-orang ka-sa-orang  
Ia-itu sa-bĕntok chinchin bĕrtanya.  
Kalau sah sa-kata  
Kata di-kĕmbalikan;  
Kalau ta' sah sa-kata,  
Tanda di-kĕmbalikan  
di-dalam tujuh hari : sa-lambat-lambat-nya dua kali tujuh  
hari.

Chinchin mĕnantikan adat  
karna

Orang bĕrbini bĕrbĕlanja,  
Orang bĕrchĕrai bĕrkĕsudahan,  
Orang bĕranak bĕrupah bidan,  
Orang nikah dĕngan mahar-nya  
Adat di-isi, janji di-laboh.  
Sah kata adat mansiang.  
Chachat chĕdĕra di-kĕmbalikan.  
Sawan gila luar janji.  
Elah si laki-laki lunchur,  
Elah si-pĕrĕmpuan ganda.

When a lad's folk have found a girl,  
 They bring the matter to her relations.  
 When a girl's folk have found a lad,  
 They bring the matter to his relations.  
 When the pact is made,  
 A token is accepted,  
 And the news spread from neighbour to neighbour,  
 The news of the ring token.  
 If the pact is made,  
 Word thereof is sent back;  
 If the pact falls through,  
 The token is sent back  
 within seven days, or at the latest days twice seven.  
 And the ring sent as token  
 Remains till the bride-fee is paid.

For

The married state involves maintenance  
 And divorce settlement,  
 And birth a midwife's fee,  
 And marriage the bride-fee  
 Bride-fee paid, the pact is made fast;  
 But the law of nature ordains  
 That the fee may be returned  
 If there is flaw or blemish in the bride.  
 Epilepsy and lunacy annul the pact.  
 If the groom break his troth, the bride-fee is forfeit.  
 If the bride break her troth, it must be repaid two-fold.